Please amend the following claims:

1. (Once amended) A stable, sterile gelled composition which comprises: a matrix containing a negative charged polymer selected from the group consisting of polysulfated glucosoglycans, glucosaminoglycans, mucopolysaccharides, and mixtures thereof and having an [mean] average molecular weight between about 650,000 and 800,000 blended with a nonionic polymer, wherein the molar ratio of the negative charged polymer to the nonionic polymer is 1:0.5 to 4 and the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.5% by weight of the resulting composition, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

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~~6~~. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the negative charged polymer to the nonionic polymer[s] is 1:0.5 to 2.

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~~7~~. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the molar ratio of the negative charged polymer to the nonionic polymer[s] is 1:0.7 to 2.5.

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~~8~~. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

~~9.~~ 6 (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 1, wherein the nonionic polymers are present in amounts of about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight of the resulting composition.

~~10.~~ (Once amended) A method for the treatment of a condition in animals for a sustained period of time, which comprises:

topically applying a therapeutically effective dose of a gelled composition comprising a polymer matrix which is suspended in a liquid medium; wherein the polymer matrix contains a negatively charged polymer selected from the group consisting of polysulfated glucosoglycans, glucosaminoglycans, mucopolysaccharides, and mixtures thereof blended with a nonionic polymer, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

13. (Once amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the material has an [mean] average molecular weight below about 800,000.

14. (Once Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the material has an [mean] average molecular weight between 700,000 and 775,000.

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15. (Once amended) The method of claim 12, wherein the hyaluronate salt is the sodium salt and has an [mean] average molecular weight from about 650,000 to about 800,000, a sulphated ash content below about 15%, a protein content below about 5% and purity of at least 98%.

21. (Once amended) A process for the use of a composition as a medical device, for drug delivery, the application of a diagnostic agent, or the prevention of post operative adhesions, said process comprises: [topically administering to a mammal an aqueous based gelled composition containing a polymer matrix composed of negatively charged polymers blended with nonionic polymers]

(a) forming an aqueous based gelled composition containing a polymer matrix composed of negatively charged polymers blended with nonionic polymers, wherein the composition is storage stable; and

(b) topically administering the aqueous based gelled composition to an animal.

24. (Once amended) The process of claim 21, wherein the material has an [mean] average molecular weight below about 800,000.

25. (Once amended) The process of claim 21, wherein the material has an [mean] average molecular weight between 700,000 and 775,000.

26. (Once amended) The process of claim 21, wherein the hyaluronate salt is the sodium salt and has an [mean] average molecular weight [form] from about 650,000 to about 800,000, a sulphated ash content below about 15%, a protein content below about 5% and purity of at least 98%.

29. (Once amended) An antiarthritic gelled composition, which comprises: therapeutically effective amounts of an active NSAID drug dispersed within a matrix containing a negative charged polymer having an [mean] average molecular weight between about 650,000 and 800,000 blended with a nonionic polymer, wherein the molar ratio of the charged polymer to the nonionic polymer is 1:0.5 to 4 and the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

~~34~~. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim ~~29~~, wherein the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

35. (Once amended) The gelled composition of claim 29, wherein the nonionic polymers are present in amounts of about 0.2 to 1.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

37. (Once amended) A method for treating an arthritic condition, which comprises: topically administering to a mammal an aqueous based gelled composition containing therapeutically effective amounts of an NSAID drug dispersed within a polymer matrix composed of a negatively charged polymer[s] blended with a nonionic polymer[s], wherein the molar ratio of the negatively charged polymer to nonionic polymer is 1:0.5 to 4, and wherein the composition is storage stable.

43. (Once amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the negative charged polymer is present in amounts of about 2.0% to about 3.0% by weight of the resulting composition.

44. (Once amended) The method of claim 37, wherein the nonionic polymers are present in amounts of about 0.1% to about 1.5% by weight of the resulting composition.